



‘Bugz’ invade Colby Grade School



First grade students at Colby Elementary School presented a musical play entitled, “Bugz,” Thursday afternoon and evening in the elementary school auditorium. ABOVE: Jessi Kriss (foreground), along

with Ashley Trail and Mischaela Benson (right) were among the many “bugz” entertaining family and friends. The two performances were under the direction of Jennifer Koel, grade school music teacher.

PATTY DECKER/Colby Free Press

Area’s new medical helicopter plans stops at here, Oakley

By MAXINE NELSON
Colby Free Press

Northwest Kansas can now lay claim to having its own medical helicopter. And the whirlbird will make its appearance in both Colby and Oakley next Tuesday with everyone in the area encouraged to take time out of their schedules to see it.

The helicopter will land at the Colby Municipal Airport at noon, and just west of the Logan County Medical Center at 8 a.m.

Stan Unruh, vice-president for communications at Hays Medical Center, encourages everyone to see this new service for the region.

EagleMed, an air ambulance service provider, and Hays Medical Center are working together to bring this vitally important service to the region, he said.

The new Eurocopter B-2 is based in Hays and will replace the King-Air turboprop airplane, Unruh said. “It will work closely with Hays Medical Center and its Michael E. DeBaakey Heart Institute of Kansas. The helicopter will officially begin transporting

patients on April 15, and the existing King-Air plane will be relocated to Goodland in May where EagleMed has hired a flight crew and medics to staff that service as well,” he said.

Most of the state has had access to air medical helicopter transport for many years, according to Unruh, and Hays Medical Center has wanted to have helicopter service ever since the fixed wing was launched eight years ago. “In many critical situations, the transport time can have a dramatic impact on saving the patient,” Unruh said. “This helicopter will travel wherever it is needed across the region to help save lives.”

The helicopter and some crew members have been visiting hospitals and clinics across the region since April 2.

On April 14, EagleMed and Hays Medical Center will host an open house featuring the new helicopter at the Hays Regional Airport. The event, scheduled from 1-3 p.m., will also feature an appearance by the Oklahoma Barnstormers, an internationally renowned radio control air show team.

Time to spring forward

By TOMA. DREILING
Free Press Publisher

Have you remembered what this weekend brings?

Sunday at 2 a.m., the time officially changes which means before going to bed Saturday night we all need to move our clocks **UP** one hour.

It’s Daylight Savings Time again, that time of year when we lose an hour’s sleep. But on the positive side it’s that time of year when it remains lighter longer to allow for the multitude of outdoor activities.

If you forget to change your clock Saturday night, chances are you are

going to be the odd folks out as you point your car in the direction of your church. The service will be ending about the time you arrive.

The two times — Daylight Savings and Standard — last for six months each. Daylight Savings begins the first Sunday in April (move clock UP one hour), and Standard begins the last Sunday in October (move clock BACK one hour).

Although summer doesn’t officially begin until June 21, most people look to the spring time change as the official start of summer.

Spring forward.

Senate panel endorses budget proposal; dips into ‘rainy day’ funds

TOPEKA (AP) — The Senate Ways and Means Committee has endorsed a proposal for eliminating part of a \$700 million budget shortfall while protecting education spending and some social services.

The proposal would dip into the state’s rainy day funds, tap extra federal funds — and require higher taxes.

Legislative staff still were reviewing the committee’s work today, and the panel’s members didn’t know exactly how big a tax increase their plan would require, but it was likely to be at least

\$200 million.

The size of the tax increase would equal the gap between expected revenues and spending that would remain at the end of the next fiscal year, if the committee’s plan were enacted. When legislators finish the budget, there must be no projected shortfall.

“It’s the first difficult step in a very difficult step,” said Sen. David Adkins, R-Leawood, a committee member.

The committee endorsed a bill making changes in the current budget on an 8-2 vote Wednesday night. It endorsed

a bill containing appropriations for the state’s next fiscal year, which begins July 1, on a 7-3 vote. Both measures went to the Senate for debate.

“I would describe it as the best we could do under the circumstances,” said Ways and Means Chairman Steve Morris, R-Hugoton.

The Senate committee’s proposal contains provisions similar to those in a plan the House approved last week. The House plan also would dip into rainy day funds, but it would have left a shortfall of \$128 million.

Gov. Bill Graves said last week that he would not support any bill that uses rainy day funds to close the shortfall.

Legislative leaders expect a joint conference committee to draft the final version of any budget plan.

The Senate committee’s proposal would keep state aid to school districts at its present \$3,870 per student. The higher education system also would see its spending remain constant.

The House plan proposed raising aid to schools by \$10 per pupil, adding another \$5.7 million in spending.

The Senate committee rejected Graves’ proposal to close five minimum-security prisons. They are prisons in Osawatimie, Stockton and Toronto and separate conservation camps for men and women in Oswego, and their operations cost \$5.5 million a year.

The Senate committee’s plan would protect some programs that provide in-home services to elderly Kansans and the disabled — but cut \$17.3 million from other social services, including for the mentally ill.

“Ugly — it’s the only way to describe it,” said Sen. Paul Feleciano, who voted against both Senate committee’s bills.

Also voting against the Senate committee’s proposed fiscal 2003 budget was Sen. Tim Huelskamp, R-Fowler, who opposes any tax increase. Huelskamp and his fellow conservative Republicans argue that Kansans can’t afford a tax increase because of the state’s slumping economy.

He said of the bill, “It’s going to take a horrendous tax increase to pay for it.”

Briefly

Weather: Showers mentioned

Keep your fingers crossed as shower activity continues to appear in the Colby area forecast. Tonight, partly cloudy then becoming cloudy and breezy, with lows in the middle 40s and south winds 15-25 mph. Saturday, cloudy early then becoming partly cloudy and windy, with highs in the middle 70s and south winds 20-30 mph. Saturday night, cloudy, 80 percent chance for showers and thunderstorms, lows in the 40s. Sunday, mostly cloudy with a 50 percent chance for showers and highs in the upper 50s. Sunday night and Monday, partly cloudy, lows in the upper 30s and highs in the middle 60s. Colby’s high Thursday was 58 and the overnight low this morning was 27. Still no precipitation for the month. The records for April 5: 86 in 1932 and 15 in 1968. (The temperatures and precipitation are provided by the Northwest Kansas Research-Extension Center, Colby.)

Fast-Pitch meeting Sunday

Sign-up for the Colby Girls Fast-Pitch Association is wrapping up. All registrations are due by Sunday. A meeting for all players and parents will be held Sunday at 3 p.m. in room 108 of the Colby Community College Student Union. For information call Barbara Wieland at 462-6501 or Tanya Staats at 462-6537. There is also a website: www.colbysweetthunder.org

Singles dance tonight

The Colby Singles Group is sponsoring its regular monthly dance tonight from 8 p.m. to midnight with Montana Express of Nebraska providing the entertainment, said Don Birzer, coordinator. The dance is open to all single people and alumni. For questions or details, call Birzer at 462-2127.

Health/Exercise program set

Michael Bradshaw, K-State Research and Extension

Health Specialist, will present “Health Benefits of Exercise” at 10 a.m. and 7 p.m. Tuesday, April 9, at the Thomas County Office Complex. RSVP to the Thomas County Extension Office (785) 462-4682 by Monday, April 8.

Reservation deadline is Friday

Jim Hoy, folklore and literature teacher at Emporia State University will speak on *Home on the Range: Kansas Folklore* at the Thomas County Historical Society annual meeting. The meeting will be at 6:30 p.m. Friday, April 12, in the Student Union. Reservations are requested by today. Reservations are \$9.75 each and should be sent to the Thomas County Historical Society, 1905 S. Franklin, Colby, Kan., 67701.

Trio to perform Sunday in Oberlin

The Western Plains Arts Association is sponsoring a group of performers known as the Starry Night Trio, in concert on Sunday, April 7, beginning at 3 p.m. (CDT) at the Gateway in Oberlin. Admissions at the door will be by Western Plains Arts Association season passes or tickets for adults \$10 and students \$5.

Kindergarten Roundup scheduled

Heartland Christian School announces its Kindergarten Roundup. The event will be held on Friday, April 19, from 8:20-11:30 a.m. at the school in Mingo. All students entering kindergarten for the 2002-2003 school year are invited to attend with their parents. To reserve your spot or to receive additional information, please contact the school office at 462-6419 before Monday, April 15.

College to host job fair in April

Colby Community College will host a job fair for health care workers from noon to 3 p.m. on Thursday, April 18, in the Robert Burnett Memorial Student Union on campus. For information or questions, call Julie Horney at 462-4788.

Getting ready for regionals



PATTY DECKER/Colby Free Press

Colby High School band and vocal students will travel to Oberlin on Saturday to participate in the Kansas State High School Activities Association Regional Solo/Ensemble contest, said Julie Groom, high school band teacher today. For those wanting to attend, activities begin at 8 a.m. and will continue throughout the day until 5 p.m. ABOVE: Dr. David Mususak, with Colby Community College’s music department, offered his assistance in preparing students for Saturday. Flute players pictured, from left to right, are: Erica Molstad, Becky Lang, Michelle Murphy, Shawna Cox and Kristi Colton. Regional results will appear next week in the Colby Free Press.

